

February 3, 1971

Dr. DeWitt Stetten, Jr.
Director
National Institutes of General Medical Sciences
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, Maryland 20014

Dear Dr. Stetten,

Thank you very much for your letter of January 28th. I am, of course, deeply gratified that we may have turned the corner in the recreation of public and governmental support for basic biomedical research with the current year appropriations and the 1972 budget. I do not minimize the sense of responsibility with which expenditures of tax funds must be approached, but I am sure that you would agree that the starvation climate of the past several years was approaching a national disaster.

I was, frankly, somewhat startled when I learned that my brother Seymour had been coopted for staff support in the analysis of the genetics program, and I think it should be clear on the record that I had taken no part in his selection. However, in spite of the fact that his own previous academic and research work have been far removed from the medical side of genetics, I know that he will approach any such assignment with great conscientiousness and vigor, that he will find the role in itself a valuable educational experience, and that the quality of his performance should soon outweigh any prior reservations about the obliquity of his expertise on the medical applications of basic genetic knowledge. There would, of course, have been potentially serious risks in selecting someone with too narrow a view of the role of genetic biology.

All together then, I share your gratification and optimism and look forward to a more congenial climate in which genetic biology can make its unique contributions.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr

STETTEN, DeWitt